What Can Happen When Business And Language Faculty Cooperate Across An Ocean?

Michael Bryant, ESC Clermont Graduate School of Management, France
Dennis Karney, University of Kansas, USA
Mary Vigier, ESC Clermont Graduate School of Management, France

ABSTRACT

Management schools are expected to educate future professionals with the necessary skills to operate successfully in a global business environment. In this paper, the authors analyze and reflect on an experiment in interdisciplinary cooperation undertaken by business faculty at a US university and language faculty at a French School of Management. The common focus of this project has been on experiential skills development of future managers through the integration of business content, culture and language. The findings point to the crucial role that faculty play in facilitating the internationalization of the learning experience for business students.

Keywords: business education, internationalization, faculty collaboration, interdisciplinary, cross-cultural

INTRODUCTION

Given the global nature of the business world today, it is critical that management degree programs develop professionals with the necessary competences to succeed in their roles as responsible managers (Boyatzis and Saatcioglu, 2008; Bennis and O'Toole, 2005; Hawawini, 2005; Mintzberg, 2004; Friga et al., 2003; Pfeffer and Fong, 2002, Porter and McKibben, 1988). Business schools need to design curricula infused with the core knowledge, practices and customs of business across the globe (Ghemawat, 2008; Scherer et al., 2003; Shetty and Rudell, 2002). Such infusion in the curricula requires active faculty involvement in its design and delivery, both its content and pedagogy (Stohl, 2007; Easterby-Smith and Preston, 1991).

However, there are numerous obstacles to overcome and numerous reasons for faculty not to step forward in this dimension of curriculum development, not the least of which are the time it takes, the lack of institutional resources and/or rewards and the interdisciplinary nature of the undertaking. The purpose of this paper is to describe one such collaborative project undertaken by business faculty at a US university and language faculty at a French School of Management that has evolved over the past fifteen years and has successfully overcome the above obstacles. This interdisciplinary cooperation has resulted in a noticeable increase in international dimensions in the core curriculum at the French school, greater faculty acceptance of business courses being delivered in a foreign language, the creation of joint programs and increased cooperation between the two schools as well as with partner institutions, further internationalization of numerous faculty and staff, and, most of all, increased opportunities for students to experience the integration of business, culture and language as part of their studies.

Since the early 1990s, the authors, and eventually many of their colleagues across the globe, have collaborated on a number of initiatives with the primary purpose of better internationalizing and developing future business professionals. In this paper, the authors adopt a confessional style of tale-telling (Van Maanen, 1998), with a focus on the process and the results of their cooperation. As the authors recall their involvement in the experience from different angles and perspectives, they aim to interpret their own understandings of the events and, hopefully, provide valuable insight for others considering such collaboration. By reconstructing and analyzing their problems and responses, their story becomes interpretative rather than merely descriptive. The personalized version of their

cooperation reveals their intimate involvement in constructing a successful new way of teaching and learning. It also illuminates how experiments can become institutionalized and how faculty can initiate the change process.

Important in understanding this experiment in interdisciplinary cooperation are the backgrounds of the primary collaborators, their educational philosophies, their roles in their respective institutions, the types of initiatives in which they became engaged, and the growth, impact and attained results of these initiatives on both an individual and institutional level. The first author is a language faculty and dean for international development at a French *Grande Ecole* of Management, with a humanistic education in Europe and an MBA obtained in mid-career. One of his key responsibilities for many years has been the development of international partnerships. The second author is a chaired professor of business in the United States. His training was in mathematics. At the beginning of this journey, his specialty was in operations management and quality improvement and he had minimal international exposure. The third author is a business English faculty member and chair of the intercultural communication department at a French *Grande Ecole* of Management. She trained in the United States and Europe, and she began her career working for a French multinational company based in the US.

In spite of the above differences, at the insistence and perseverance of one common student, the first two authors met initially over lunch and discussed an intriguing possibility. Would the business professor come to France for a week and teach an intensive course on a business topic in English to French students for whom English was a second language? The chosen topic would be one not covered in the French curriculum, but of high interest to future business professionals. The class would be presented in much the same way as in the US so that students who had never left France as part of their education or business practicum could experience an alternative culture. The purpose would be to see if, by the end of one week, with 21 hours of class, the business topic could drive the learning with the second language no longer an issue and to see if the course structure and delivery could create an experience of a different culture, however brief.

This is a paper on that initial experiment and on numerous further experiments in the internationalization of the curriculum, primarily at the French school, that resulted from it; a paper on the collaboration of faculty from radically different perspectives united by their shared concern for student development; a paper on their growth, learning, frustrations and friendships that grew out of this. It is shared at this time so that faculty from business and language can:

- discover what is possible when they cooperate,
- realize that what is possible is so much more than just teaching some language and cultural basics,
- understand how students can be better prepared for the business world they will work in,
- and initiate some new ideas or possibilities for cooperation at their own institution or even at institutions an ocean apart.

Today, the French school has successfully infused second language learning and internationalization into its entire set of programs, including institutionalizing the original experiment into its curriculum. The two-language faculty have focused their research on the internationalization of business schools and cross-cultural development. They continue to be active drivers of the school's efforts to implement its international strategy. The business professor now specializes in international business, regularly teaches executives in China and students in France. He also became actively involved in his institution's CIBER as a co-principal investigator on the grant for a four-year cycle. The three authors pursue their collaboration to this day, continuing to experiment and improve curricular offerings for the betterment of their joint and respective students in their future careers.

This paper is organized as follows: the relevant history of the institutions and key players to provide a picture of the context in which this collaboration unfolded; the initial experiment and organizational journey to its institutionalization; the various offshoots, program changes and new offerings at the French school as well as new joint projects with the US school; reflections, learning and advice; and concluding remarks addressing future anticipated steps.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Internationalizing a business program, ideally, should involve integrating foreign languages as a compulsory component (Shetty and Rudell, 2002; Marschan et al., 1997; Sonntag, 1996). Compared to graduate management education programs in other countries, the French *Grandes Ecoles* have always been well placed in integrating foreign language skills into the business curriculum (Bryant, 1993). Candidates to these schools must show proficiency in English and at least one other foreign language. Compulsory courses in two foreign languages continue throughout the program. Many students opt to start a third foreign language and academic credit is awarded towards the final degree for all language education.

At the French school, internationalization efforts were intensified in the late 1970s. The long-term development strategy included a clear institutional commitment to open up the school beyond regional and national borders. The plan focused on recruiting international faculty members in management disciplines, developing student exchange schemes and integrating compulsory study or work outside of France within the Master in Management, the primary degree program.

As the school expanded in the 1980s, its international network of partner schools grew to more than twenty universities. The internationalization process accelerated when the Regional Council provided substantial scholarship support to enable up to twenty students annually to study at partner universities in the United States. The students obtained an MBA in addition to their French Masters. Mutual transfer of credits was an integral part of this pioneering scheme. Double degree programs were in their infancy at this time. As part of the return on investment for the Regional Council, these scholarship students were required to contribute to the school's development on returning from the US. Various projects were initiated by such students, in particular by one passionate student who argued forcefully to bring a professor from her MBA school to teach at her home institution in France. As seen below, her efforts were the spark for the beginning of this cooperation even though the spark did not really ignite until after her graduation.

Her idea was simple: by inviting visiting professors to the school, more students could take advantage of exposure to international faculty. The MBA program in the United States benefited a privileged few. By bringing faculty from a US partner, many more students could follow a management course in English and learn about a topic not currently offered at the school in order to further enhance their knowledge and skills base. At the time, internationalization at home had become a key element of the school's strategy, given the increasing student numbers and limited opportunities for educational and/or professional experiences outside of France. Therefore, the student's proposal rang true for the first author and he approved the idea as long as she was willing to do the work, even though he was a little skeptical of the school's quick acceptance.

The foreign language faculty members were the first to understand and support the project. They realized that exposing students to management courses in a foreign language, in this case English, reinforced their work in the language classroom. Moreover, this proposal would further embed languages in the business curriculum (Shetty and Rudell, 2002; Bryant et al., 2006); it would use teaching materials that were real-life and content-based with an absorbing methodology (Tedick et al., 2001); it would provide the potential to motivate students to forget about language rules and forms and to concentrate on communicating their own ideas and comments orally (Wilkins, 1974). All these goals were very consistent with the language department's teaching philosophy. Furthermore, as the language classroom at the French school is seen as a springboard to studying and working outside of France, such a management class, taught by visiting faculty, would reinforce the language faculty's teaching and improve the students' preparation for going abroad (Bryant and Sheehan, 2004).

From an internal organizational standpoint, the challenge was to convince the program director to accept such an experiment. As head of international relations, the first author played a key role in facilitating acceptance. His background, with degrees in languages and an MBA, helped him articulate effectively why such an opportunity was important for the students' education and development.

The second key thread of this story involves the identification of the initial business faculty member. In this, the above-mentioned scholarship student was also very adamant. She argued that the second author was the

appropriate person as the subjects he focused on, production and total quality management, were missing in the curriculum at the French school, and yet they were critical for business success. Her classmates needed to be exposed to such topics. Moreover, she argued that the professor's teaching style, while effective, was so different from those in France that her classmates would also benefit from this exposure. The first author eventually accepted her recommendation and authorized her to initiate the contact.

The business professor, the second author, received his PhD in 1980 in mathematics, switched to a business school a year later, and became a full professor after nine years. Initially, he focused on the technical side of manufacturing and distribution but soon he shifted to quality improvement and the people side of business. He strongly believed that teaching business was much more than reporting what others say, whether in textbooks or research papers. In the mid to late 1980s, he and a colleague began to consult, initially in quality and continuous improvement so that they could better understand what they were teaching. They designed numerous MBA courses as well as management development and company specific courses in quality improvement, teaching hundreds of managers across the Midwestern United States (Hillmer and Karney, 1997; Dalrymple et al., 2000).

In the classroom, the professor was well regarded for his attention to pedagogy and his ability to connect with students. His teaching style was unorthodox by business school standards and focused on the building of management skills and thought processes through integrating theory and experience. He won numerous awards and became the youngest distinguished teaching professor in his school.

In the fall of 1993, the business professor received a call from his former student. She wanted to inform him of the exciting project she was involved in and wanted to know if he would be willing to come to teach in France as part of the project. He agreed, not really understanding what he had agreed to. As is often the case with new ideas, whether they are in business or higher education, enthusiasm, dedication, persistence and hard work are not always enough to create, organize and execute a new program in a short time frame, in this case during the same academic year. It would take nearly two years, by which time the student advocate had graduated. In spite of initial resistance by the program director at the French school and after numerous challenges, including currency fluctuations, budget issues and typical faculty resistance to change, the project was finally approved, on one condition, that the US business professor paid his own air fare. Fortuitously, as a chaired professor, he had discretionary funds available to support professional activities.

THE INITIAL EXPERIMENT

Given the institutional approvals, the class was scheduled to focus on a management topic not currently available at the French school, relevant to businesses at that time, and reflecting the professor's particular competences. The professor would deliver the course in English to a group of 40 students, in the manner he taught in the US, using overheads to help linguistic understanding. It would be one of five courses being offered during a set week of intensives for the final-year students, each devoted to a single topic. Fortunately, the week coincided perfectly with spring break at the professor's university.

In order to maximize a successful outcome, the first author managed the class enrolment process. First, he selected two students who had followed classes with the professor in the US to serve as informal teaching assistants. As part of their service for scholarships, they were also to manage the non-classroom arrangements, activities and meals. Second, he selected students who had studied in the US, but not at the professor's university, and others who had studied abroad elsewhere. Finally, the remaining balance of the class, about half, consisted of French students who had not been out of the country for academic or professional reasons. This module would serve as their first professional culture awareness experience and would be offered in March of 1995.

Initial assessment of the experiment revealed several issues. Despite apprehension on the part of the full-time faculty at the French school, students appreciated the chance to experience new teaching styles at the home campus. Students who had studied outside of France, even those who had not been in the US, appreciated a return to their experience abroad. Proof of success was demonstrated by high attendance throughout the week, especially on the last day, a Friday before holidays, unlike the low turnout in other classes. Thanks to positive student feedback and word of mouth promotion, the same course attracted the highest number of enrolments in the second year of the experiment.

Obstacles in the first year revealed gaps in the school's internationalization activities, most importantly, concerning the mechanics of paying teaching fees and subsistence costs. Addressing both of these required some creativity. As there was no budget for hotel and food expenses for visiting professors, the first author had to scrape together resources from another account. The school's financial administration did not have processes to pay salaries to foreign faculty, and in France administrative processes are important. Consequently, in order to pay the teaching fee, the pay had to be turned into petty cash and handed over daily in an envelope in a closed office. New administrative procedures and new budget lines had to be developed for the future, and not just for this experiment.

In the classroom, the visiting business professor had to confront different learning styles and student expectations in terms of faculty behavior. On one occasion, the professor showed money to illustrate a point and, in another example, he used a dating analogy to try to generate discussion. From a cultural viewpoint, both of these approaches turned out to be the wrong things to do. In the dating analogy, the class was quickly in an uproar, but fortunately the student assistants communicated with the professor at breaks and dinners to help him better understand the cultural issues and to offer suggestions. They even arranged evening meals for the professor with invitations to students from the class to help clarify these cultural errors. In addition, those who had studied in the US talked with classmates at break times to facilitate cross-cultural understanding. Collaborative learning was happening. The language faculty members, who also attended some of his classes, were offering advice to slow down, stop slurring words, and try to use less colloquial language. Only a few of the home business faculty became involved and offered some advice.

Given this initial teaching experience abroad, the second author learned from his faux-pas and modified certain aspects of his pedagogical style. He emphasized more upfront that one of the purposes of this class was to have an alternative cultural and academic experience. He also encouraged discussions around this issue and asked at least once a day for feedback on speaking speed, word choice and clarity. He provided real-life examples to illustrate his arguments, in particular with respect to quality shortcomings. This was still more than many students could handle as people just do not talk about problems in public in France, especially if they are foreigners! Still, the students were very pleased with the offering and it was time to determine the future of the experiment.

GROWING THE EXPERIMENT

Following this initial success, the first author now faced the question of how to build on what had been learnt and how to create more such opportunities at the school. The appointment of a new Director General provided the necessary boost to move forward. He was impressed with the international efforts in general, and this experiment, in particular. He therefore committed additional resources and his active support to the internationalization efforts, so that the school could invite six visiting faculty members for one week in order to offer all the final year management specialization courses in a foreign language. International Week (IW) was born. In the first year, five courses were offered in English and one in German by faculty from partner universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. The second author was part of this group. Care was given to offer a variety of subject areas - marketing, finance, quality management, entrepreneurship and Franco-German culture - to better ensure students could select a topic of interest. Particular attention was also given to dealing with some of the issues which had emerged in the experimentation phase. Besides assigning each faculty member a student teaching assistant home faculty were encouraged to meet the visitors, possibly have lunch together and even attend some of the classes. During the daily group dinners, the second author shared experiences and exchanged ideas from the previous two years. The language faculty members, including the two authors, were also very actively involved.

In subsequent years, joint faculty meetings allowed for exchanges on best practices in management education in the different countries represented. Driven by the home faculty, a research seminar emerged at the start of the week. To reinforce the special nature of IW, a previous president of France gave a guest lecture to an audience consisting of the students, the faculty and members of the general public. The visiting faculty group began to develop a Spanish enclave, which helped make the professors from Spain, Mexico and South America more welcome. Formal and informal dinners continued to be arranged throughout the week. The essential elements of IW had been created and a spirit of a new entity began to emerge.

Over the years, the visiting faculty team has grown to a regular annual number of between 30 to 40 professors, representing over 20 different nationalities from several continents. More than 800 students are now included from different years and degree programs so that essentially every student in the school is involved. Courses are now taught in English, German, Italian and Spanish. Numerous exchanges, discussions and lunches continue to occur, with host faculty inviting the visitors to their homes for dinner. These social interactions, coupled with the research seminar, are important parts of internationalizing home faculty (Easterby-Smith and Preston, 1991). Students have also become involved by organizing a Global Village evening where international students on campus prepare food and present entertainment from their home country. Finally, each week concludes with a formal French dinner, often in a château overlooking the city. Country toasts and humorous speeches have become the norm and a spirit of togetherness has emerged.

BEYOND INTERNATIONAL WEEK

An important offshoot of all these activities for the French school has been the building up of social capital with the home institutions of the various visiting faculty (Sasi and Arenius, 2008). In this way, the school has been able to increase its internationalization activities by extending its offering of programs taught in English with a track for its two-year Master in Management program and new Master of Science programs. Innovative certificate courses have been developed in collaboration with faculty from partner institutions, resulting in curriculum enrichment and new academic links with partners. Business faculty exchanges have grown from the French school and more visiting faculty have become involved in programs other than IW. A new scholarship program has been initiated, with doctoral students spending one or two semesters at the French campus. As a result of these efforts, four PhD students from the US partner school have spent at least a semester in France, with one joining the French school faculty after completion of his degree and another returning for a sabbatical year. In addition, one French professor has spent eight weeks at the US school as a visiting faculty member.

Collaboration between the authors' schools has benefited considerably from these activities in different ways. Initially, the first two authors, with the help of a third colleague, reported on the IW experiment (Bryant et al., 2000). Later, they designed and implemented a joint course where MBA students from the US school visit the French school for spring break and join Masters students for a week-long program that includes lectures, company visits and a regional economic project involving multicultural teams. The content and course organization are driven by French practices while the group project and team development by US practices. To date, over 150 students from each school have participated with class sizes ranging from 20 to 45. A few years after launching this project, the first two authors sketched out a dual MBA/Masters degree proposal which was eventually adopted by both schools and enabled students to earn a US MBA and a French Masters degree. This was the first dual degree program for the US school with a foreign school and enriched a 60-year-plus partnership. Interestingly, the ideas learned from this cooperation have been transferred by the French school to another US partner for a similar experience in France with the inclusion of required language education for their MBA students.

REFLECTIONS

Reflecting on the IW experience, time and time again the authors come back to the same realization, that faculty initiative and cooperation have been critical for its success. Throughout the process, there always seem to have been some faculty or staff to step forward, sometimes language faculty, sometimes visiting faculty, sometimes a staff member, sometimes French business faculty … always exhibiting the same willingness to roll up their sleeves, be a little creative and get something done. That is not to say that this internationalization took only faculty and staff initiative. Fortuitously, the second author had discretionary funds to pay for the first plane ticket; the new director was hired at just the right time to fund and grow the experiment; the US school was awarded a CIBER grant and the director invested seed money in the joint MBA course; and the first author became program director at just the right time to extend the initiative to all the students of the primary degree program. The point is that this change process was primarily driven by faculty, from multiple disciplines from multiple schools, and even multiple countries, to create learning opportunities for the students, to help them acquire the awareness, knowledge and skills needed in the world of global business.

Increasing the international dimension of the French school has been a critical objective all throughout this story. The entire language faculty involved themselves from the beginning and lobbied hard to gain organizational acceptance. They employed creative ideas to demonstrate that the entire cost for the week was only incrementally higher than a normal week while the result was a student learning experience with considerable added value. Visiting faculty were paid below market rate for their teaching, but at the same time they appreciated the richness of the experience and the diversity of the other visiting and home faculty. For many years the school used students returning from study abroad as resources in the classroom to assist the visiting professors in the challenges of teaching in a new educational context. Language faculty participated in the classroom to help build the necessary connections for students and teachers to benefit effectively from this experience. The language faculty and administrators not only ensured that all the members of the school knew about the IW program, they also worked to create a spirit of inclusion for the visiting faculty thanks to various socializing events outside the classroom that played an essential role in building a core group of committed faculty.

The language faculty were important drivers in the success of this pedagogical experiment. They participated enthusiastically and actively in IW for several reasons. The language teaching philosophy at the school meant that the faculty embraced any activity that involved challenging materials and stimulated the students to use their language skills in an intellectually satisfying context. In addition to providing the necessary bridge for students to connect both with the course contents and the visiting faculty teaching them, they tried to allay student fears and apprehensions concerning the week. This counseling role emanated from their close relationship with students that has grown out of their classrooms where students are expected to speak about their backgrounds and their own experiences as well as to provide personal opinions on a wide range of subjects. This proximity to the students – awareness of their needs and apprehensions as well as understanding their learning habits – became a two-way bridge during IW. Students were better prepared to adapt to non-native teaching styles. Furthermore, when the visiting faculty arrived for the first time, language faculty were available and willing to provide helpful hints and advice for the newcomers. Finally, after IW, the language faculty were better equipped to discuss students' career planning, especially in an international setting.

Many visiting faculty also became actively involved in further developing and improving IW. Early on, many evenings were dominated by discussions of what occurred in the classroom, what was attempted and what might work. Experiences were shared from home institutions about other international sojourns. Language faculty were sought out, advice asked, invitations extended to come and observe classes. Pedagogy was altered, as was content, both during the week and in subsequent IWs as a greater understanding of the students and their backgrounds emerged. Efforts have spilled over for several of the visiting faculty into other initiatives for the French school with some returning to teach in other parts of the curriculum. In fact, if asked why they return, most will note the excitement of the week and the friendships that have been established.

The administrative support staff have also contributed to the successful running and management of IW. The international office staff coordinate interactions between the visitors and the home administrators. In this way, even the support staff across the school feel part of the process. Indeed, preparations for this special week create a certain atmosphere and anticipation, an opportunity to meet regular visitors again and to put a face to those countless emails. In the early days, IW allowed administrators in accounting, scheduling, physical logistics and technological support to collaborate on an international and interdepartmental project. Today, many activities have become routine and many faculty travel with their own computer equipment, but the administrative staff still look forward to IW. For some it also provides an opportunity to communicate in English, a challenge they share with the home faculty. Over the years, many have reduced their apprehensions about communicating in a second language and have even improved their skills. This helps throughout the year given the numerous foreign visitors to the school. Finally, for others, the week just represents a break in the regular weekly schedule and, as such, provides occasions for innovation and change.

PERSONAL LEARNING AND IMPACTS

The three authors have grown significantly professionally and personally through their collective experiences and collaboration. Indeed, each approaches their jobs differently today as a result of the above initiatives. The key elements of each author's personal learning are now provided along with discussion of their impacts on their respective careers.

For the first author, this interdisciplinary cooperation has had a profound effect on him as a faculty member and as an administrator. As a language teacher he has grown to understand how the visiting faculty are a critical link in the infusion of language into the business curriculum at the school. They were the missing piece in the language efforts initiated years before. These business faculty members used a foreign language and different teaching methods in their classrooms. Students in the IW classes experienced a professional setting where the business content was the driver, with a different classroom organization and a foreign language as the means of communicating. This type of educational experience was understandably harder for the home faculty to offer as most of their language skills were, at best, conversational in nature and their teaching styles primarily French in approach.

As an administrator, he has grown to appreciate how valuable the fresh ideas of the visiting faculty and their different teaching styles have been both to the students' development and to the home faculty in their discussions on curriculum and pedagogy. He now realizes how threatened the home faculty could feel and how much they could resist change. Indeed, he wishes he had spent more time addressing this issue early in the journey since he seriously underestimated the time and energy it would take, and this remains an issue today. Finally, he has observed and felt, as did the third author, how energized, motivated, engaged and productive (Bryant et al., 2006; Bryant and Sheehan, 2004) language faculty can become when they are viewed and treated as fellow colleagues.

For the second author, the above experiences and initiatives have opened his eyes to the richness and diversity of the world in general and the business world in particular, especially in terms of people, methodologies, thinking, feeling and learning. He has witnessed his teaching and thinking change over time, from the need to drive out the variability that is critical in quality management to the need and desire to embrace diversity and infuse it into his classroom (Tee and Karney, 2009). This experience has made him a much better teacher. He now understands how limiting the English word 'the' can be, how different people really are, and how valuable language faculty can be both in and outside the classroom as colleagues, personal consultants and friends.

As a result of these experiences, he now focuses his teaching on the area of international business, has had the courage to spend a semester in the Ukraine on a Fulbright and annually spends three to six weeks in China teaching Chinese executives and government officials. His biggest regret has been in not following his own advice (Barnes and Karney, 2007) in managing expectations back home and better communicating as administrations changed. Even so, paraphrasing an infamous advertising campaign, the return on investment for that first airline ticket was, and continues to be, 'priceless'!

For the third author, the numerous interactions and various collaborations with multiple visiting faculty and language colleagues at dinners, in hallways, and after attending classes and even entire courses, have made her a much better teacher and student adviser. First and foremost, this experience exposed her to diverse pedagogical approaches which have not only broadened her thinking on teaching but have helped her better understand and articulate the learning habits of the French and even European students. It has made her conscious of just how important a heavy dose of theory is to French students and how important it is to help those students understand different teaching methods. This has been invaluable in explaining how language classes differ and it has helped in advising these students as they consider their study abroad and international career options.

Second, the IW experiences have helped her better comprehend critical business topics related to ethics, marketing and quality management; how business faculty use English in these settings; how they think, how they conceive of things. For her, this translates into better classroom discussions in her business English classes. Indeed, this understanding helped her, the first author and three colleagues develop a textbook for teaching business English to French students (Bryant et al., 2007). Moreover, she has learnt how to better advise incoming international exchange students as they begin studies at her school. Finally, in her role as chair of the intercultural communication department, she has learnt to engage her faculty in integrating and linking their language and culture teaching with the offerings during the IW, something she wishes had happened much sooner in the experiment.

CONCLUSIONS

Before the introduction of the IW program, the French school's internationalization efforts were focused essentially on student exchange programs. Home students were encouraged to improve their language skills and their business knowledge by studying or working at least six months abroad. International students were welcomed to the campus where they followed courses in French. This was at a time when many partner universities, especially in Europe, still had students who mastered French at an advanced level. In addition to the student focus, the school had also tinkered with the curriculum, adding an international component to some of the courses. The missing dimension was faculty involvement.

From an institutional perspective, the above initiatives, especially IW, have enabled the French school to begin to address the issue of internationalizing the faculty (Easterby-Smith and Preston, 1991). The home faculty have been brought face to face with foreign faculty. Some have avoided this coming together and have taken little advantage of the potential for exchange and growth. Others have seized the opportunity and linked up enthusiastically with the visiting faculty. As a result, they have begun to improve their English language skills through informal discussions and formal academic presentations during the research seminar. They have initiated joint projects which, in some cases, have resulted in joint publications. The language faculty have probably benefited even more from this interaction with visiting business faculty. Several of them have now begun doctoral studies in business or economics, and some have even published articles in collaboration with their management colleagues abroad (Scherer et al., 2005; Bryant and Scherer, 2009).

The social networking that has resulted from this faculty cooperation has led to concrete, positive outcomes including, at an institutional level, a building up of social capital and an increasing number of partnerships (110 today and in all corners of the world) which has allowed for further program and curriculum development. Today, nearly every student studies or completes an internship at least six months abroad and sometimes as much as two years. This means that at any given time, there are over 300 students off campus. Business classes taught all-in-English are now offered regularly. These include an all-English track, several Masters programs, and even dual degree undergraduate and graduate programs with partner institutions in North and South America, as well as Europe. Indeed, international expertise and competency are now considered a core asset of the French school and a critical part of its strategic plan.

While the institutional benefits can be clearly demonstrated, the next question is really whether it has made a difference, whether the professional community has noticed, and whether the students are indeed better prepared. In 2005, the French school was awarded AACSB accreditation, and more recently, it was ranked by the Financial Times in the top 50 pre-professional Masters programs worldwide. In both cases, the quality and the variety of the international offerings were recognized as an institutional strength. The faculty at the French school have consistently approved the greater inclusion of business courses taught in foreign languages and more experience abroad in the curriculum. Indeed, when IW was dropped for final year students, after the mandatory international experience requirement was in place, it was the faculty who co-championed with the students for its reinstatement. Finally, there is much anecdotal evidence of the impact of these efforts on students from employers' statements of appreciation and alumni testimonials. The next question for the authors is whether this impact on students can be studied and somehow captured objectively.

To address this, the authors have begun to focus solely on IW and gather data on whether or not IW is working, whether it is meeting its objectives and whether there are observable outcomes. A few years ago, the authors, with the help of a statistical colleague, began a pluri-annual study to collect quantitative and qualitative data to examine whether the learning objectives for IW are indeed being realized. In addition, the authors seek to identify other perceived learning outcomes, barriers to achieving the stated objectives, and changes that can help further the learning and developmental outcomes. To date, three years of qualitative and quantitative data have been gathered with an average response rate of almost 42% and the authors are currently analyzing the 800+ surveys. They have also conducted focus groups and guided interviews with key stakeholders. Preliminary results look promising and will be the subject of a future report. Worthy of note is that for the 285 students who responded the first year, 142 checked "absolutely" and only four checked "no" when asked if IW should be continued in the future. Given how critical French students can be, something is working in their eyes.

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AUTHOR INFORMATION

Michael Bryant is presently Dean, International Development, at ESC Clermont Graduate School of Management. He coordinated the school's AACSB International initial accreditation and served on the AACSB Pre-Accreditation Committee from 2007 to 2010. He has worked as mentor and advisor for several business schools in Europe and Latin America in their preparation for AACSB accreditation. His research interests and publications include accreditation issues, the internationalization of business education, and the role of international experience in developing the interpersonal and cross-cultural skills required of today's managers.

Dennis Karney is Ned N. Fleming Distinguished Teaching Professor in International Business at the University of Kansas. He has lectured in France, China, Ukraine and Mexico. In 2005, he spent one semester in Ukraine as a Fulbright Scholar. He has led 11 MBA study abroad courses to France, Germany and China. From 2002 to 2006, Dennis served as Associate Director of the KU-CIBER. He has developed and delivered over 280 days of professional education to executives in the USA and China.

Mary Vigier is Chair of the Intercultural Communication Department and Professor of Business English at ESC Clermont School of Management in Clermont-Ferrand, France. She co-authored, with four colleagues, "Mastering Business English: A Learning Resource Book," now in its second edition. Mary serves on the Board of Directors for UPLEGESS (*Union des Professeurs de Langues des Grandes Ecoles*), the Association of Language Teachers at French *Grandes Ecoles* of Management and Engineering. Her research focuses on intercultural competencies in multicultural teams.

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